

"PETER REVSON: RACE TO GLORY"

BY

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He was handsome, famous, loved by beautiful women. But in the end he could not outrun the ill luck that chased him.

When Peter Revson was a child, his father told the mother to raise him and that when the boy became a grown man, he would then take over. Peter showed very few signs of being deprived or cheated. He took his life in stride and seemed the happiest of men...loving and doing what he wished. Racing motor cars. And as the years went by, becoming^{part} of the elite. One of the top Formula One drivers in the world. He drove the international Grand Prix's from South Africa to Watkins Glen.

It was in college that Peter Revson met a man who was to change his life and eventually, to help take it. Teddy Mayer was a tough, single-minded man who was determined to make his younger brother, Don, the best racing driver in the world. This, when Don was still only seventeen and competing with his friend Peter Revson in road races using their light sport cars. Both Don and Peter handled cars as if they were born in the drivers' seat and each knew he had found his profession.

Between the two, Peter would secretly admit that Don was the better driver. At least he won more of the primitive road races they were beginning to enter. But Peter was sure he would sooner or later eclipse his friend.


The rivalry ended abruptly when Don was killed in a crash as he and Peter carried out a challenge as to which route would take them home faster from a party in Connecticut.

Teddy Mayer was devastated at his kid brother's death. And though it was always unspoken, he never forgave that Peter Revson lived. To go on with a life that should have been Don Mayer's.

Peter was always conscious of the name he bore. And yet the wealth and prestige were never his. Neither was the family love or loyalty. For his father and Uncle(Charles, the founder) had been separated for most of his life, as had his own parents.

Racing is an expensive business. To run a Formula One operation takes close to a million dollars. No driver can do it on his own. Besides, there was the challenge to prove that you were good enough for a combine to invest all that money in your ability. Each time you drove, millions were at stake. For all the major firms associated with the auto industry had pieces of the action and a winner meant more sales.

Peter did it the hard way. Using the last of his savings he bought an old milk wagon and outfitted it as a traveling machine shop. It went with him all over the world as he raced a car that had been resurrected from the scrap heap. Slowly his reputation grew.



Along the way there were women. And they were beautiful. But none of them seemed able to provide the real love for himself that he wanted so badly. It was Revson, the handsome, dashing hero the women wanted. He knew this and the image cost him.

Racing became his whole life now. The only way he could prove himself...to himself. He was now truly a professional. He studied his cars and would not drive one that he felt unsafe. An aging driver, desperate for a car, took a racer that Revson had rejected. He warned the older man the car was unsafe but his need was too great. The car killed him.

Peter learned that he would always have to race against himself and not the other drivers if he was ever to be the world champion. He learned to deal with death and how to accept it.

He saw his best friend burst into flames and knew that part of himself was in the man. For many months later, he came to Indy one early morning and found his car missing. There it was, moving around the track and at the wheel, his friend, driving in pain to prove that he was still alive.

Peter Revson was committed now. There seemed no turning back. Winning the championship would be his acceptance..and his worth. And proof that he was on the right course seemed to come from both his father and uncle who shared a common pride in Peter. There was talk of a possible reconciliation.

Peter, by now, had given up the idea of ever falling in love. And then one day he met Marjie Wallace. A magnificent looking woman who burned with her own desires to make something of her life. Peter loved her...wanted her and even though she

was willing to give up her own ambition, it seemed too late for him. He could always depend on his car..his driving,to take him where he so intensely needed to go. But Marjie was a fighter and she would not give up easily.

She thought that if she could become more than she was, there might be a chance of bringing him to her. That the absence of her would make him acknowledge that loss. She became Miss World and Peter wavered. But she had come along too late. His course was irrevocably set.

Teddy Mayer had also begun to realize a dream. He was now probably the best known racing team manager in the world. For Teddy ran the McLaren Team, winner of more championships than any other. They had the engineering, they had the cars and... they had the best drivers.

Peter had begun to drive for Teddy. A tough, taciturn man, all that mattered to him was winning. He used Peter because he had need of him and he could handle his cars. But the relationship between the two men was always uneasy. Don Mayer's death still remained a fresh and bitter memory. But as Teddy had tried to live through his brother, he was now doing the same with Peter.

The moment came when both Peter's father and uncle agreed to come to South Africa to see him race in the Grand Prix that would decide the world championship. It was the culmination of everything that Peter had worked for. To heal his family..and to be a winner.

Each time he raced however, sustaining some near misses and crashes, Marjie would plead with him to quit. Their life together would give him all that he needed. Perhaps after South Africa, he told her...when he had fulfilled his dream.

South Africa. And a week before the race, Teddy Mayer took Peter off the car. It was the new contract, he explained. Peter couldn't commit himself to driving for the McLaren team for the next two years and they had a driver who could. Peter raged. Everything he had struggled for was now going down the drain. He had no car.

In an effort to beat the McLaren team, another organization had built a car with some experimental metal in order to save weight and increase speed. It had been tested but never under the tremendous stress of a Grand Prix race. The car was offered to Peter Revson...and he accepted.

Marjie Wallace, his
/ father and uncle arrived and joined in their pride of him. From a vantage point, they saw Peter's car roar around a curve, fail to hold it and then plunge off, bursting into flames. A critical mechanism in the transmission had given away. The new metal had failed to hold. Peter was dead.

Don Mayer's ghost had haunted Peter Revson. But it was Teddy Mayer who had lived with the memory. Taking Peter off the McLaren car at the climactic moment of his career, some of his friends say, was a deliberate ploy to force Peter onto the lesser car and to insure that he lost the race. That he lost his life as well produced a tragedy that Teddy Mayer had not expected. Or had he?

But Marjie Wallace had no heart for recrimination. She could only remember what her lost love had once written to her. "One day the drivers will leave the track and find the world has ended. That a war went on while we played our reckless game."